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We Count! Girl Scout Teens Develop Patch Program to Show the Power of the Census

KANSAS CITY, MO (April 20, 2020) – Girl Scouts are all about taking action and engaging with their communities. In 2019, GSKSMO began a special teen group called ACES (Advocacy, Civic Engagement and Service). This group works on projects building skills in the Girl Scout Civic Engagement program pillar. As part of their work, these Girl Scouts had an incredible opportunity to engage with the Kansas team of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Our ACES group began by learning about the Census; how the process works, why it is important and more. These Girl Scouts came up with a project to engage their problem solving, innovator and creative skills to come up with a way to count those who may not be aware of the Census process and build a campaign for other Girl Scouts to learn more about the process. They came up with a two-prong plan and split into two committees: work with Girl Scout families who are a part of the hard-to-count population (Census defines hard-to-count as those hard to locate, contact, interview and persuade) and create a patch program for all ages of Girl Scouts (K-12th).

Girl Scouts on the Complete Count committee began their work and had fantastic results prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The secondary Census Patch committee developed a fun, skill-building program that Girl Scouts could engage the whole family in, including leading their parents / caregivers through the completion of their Census survey. This patch program was originally set up to engage the 20,000 Girl Scouts across the 47 counties of northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri (the GSKSMO council).

When stay at home orders began across the nation, Girl Scout families were looking for engaging activities for their kids. The GSKSMO Census patch program went viral. To date, more than 1,000 Girl Scouts and their families have completed this patch. The completion process includes three parts with fun, engaging activities under each: learning more about the Census, promoting the Census and then completing the Census. [See all the details for the patch now.](#) Today, Girl

Scouts, not yet Girl Scouts and their families from 42 states and Puerto Rico have completed this Census patch.

“We are committed to providing girls opportunities to grow in their leadership skills,” Joy Wheeler, CEO of Girl Scouts of NE Kansas & NW Missouri said. “What an incredible opportunity for our Girl Scouts to work with the U.S. Census Bureau, develop curriculum, brainstorm and initiate a plan and see their work utilized and enjoyed by Girl Scouts, non-Girl Scouts and families around the country.”

"We are so proud of these young women for their creativity and leadership in this program. They may still be in high school, but these girls are leading their community and the nation. Their message is spreading to other young people across the country and is encouraging all kids to make sure their families are counted in the 2020 Census," said Cathy Lacy, Regional Director for the US Census Bureau.

About Girl Scouts of NE Kansas & NW Missouri

Girl Scouts is the largest organization for girls in the world. Our mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Through activities in four program focus areas; ***STEAM*** (science, technology, engineering and math combined with experiences through the arts) ***Entrepreneurship***, ***Outdoor Experiences*** and ***Civic Engagement / Life Skills***, Girl Scouting provides girls with opportunities for fun and friendship, while fostering development of leadership skills and self-esteem. Girl Scouts of NE Kansas & NW Missouri is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA and supports 22,000 girl members and 9,000 adult volunteers in its 47-county jurisdiction surrounding the Greater Kansas City, St. Joseph and Topeka areas. For more information, visit www.gksmo.org.

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